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# DISCOVERING ARISTOTLE: AN EXAMINATION OF HIS LIFE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS IMMUTABLE BRILLIANCE

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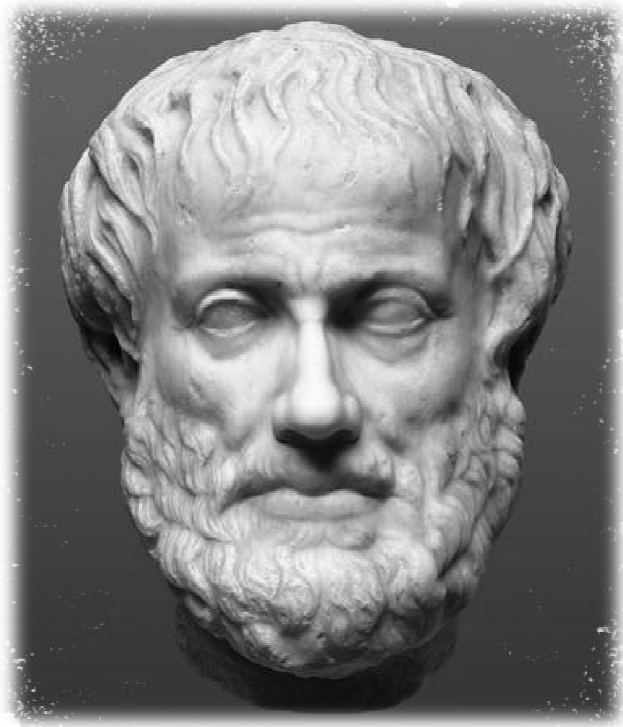
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*Discovering*

# ARISTOTLE

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**An Examination of his Life and the Development of his  
Immutable Brilliance**



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Retrospect will bear witness to the fact that the contemporary human condition is but a product of thousands of years of development which, in turn, was perpetuated by the greatest minds that such a fledgling species could possibly muster. In light of this, one fundamental metaphysical truth concerning human reality quickly becomes apparent: that, indeed, it was the unparalleled genius of hundreds of thousands of thinkers, toiling under the drudgery of intellectual labor, which formulated that conception of existence that has come to predominate modernity. But what idiosyncratic intellect, what anomalous creature, born of rationality, could possibly epitomize such a development? What prime member of such a young species of beings so diligent, so obsessed with progress, could be indicative of that infatuation with the expansion of the capabilities of humanity? One particular individual whose conception of reality insinuates itself into the rudimentary structure of human thought, whose incredible acumen, when compounded with an insatiable desire for truth for its own sake, resulted in a being whose prominence for prolificacy surpasses any other; that individual is the ever-illustrious Aristotle.

The objective of the current piece is to succinctly examine the life and work of Aristotle while emphasizing his early or “exoteric” works (and, to a much lesser extent, his treatises) in an attempt to illustrate the maturation of his brilliance in a manner which further elucidates the relationship that exists between the various facets of his personal being and the philosophy which was synthesized as a product of his particular person. Consequently, the inquiry at hand does not explicitly select a single thesis as its primary end but, instead, adopts several theories regarding the essence of Aristotelian thought through the means of a concise dissection of his personality, relationships, convictions and method. Thus, although by no means a comprehensive review of Aristotle in his entirety (for such work is undoubtedly in demand, given the virtual absence of any single piece which commits to this noble endeavor), the present text will attempt to address

Aristotle in a compendious fashion while recognizing the contributions, and alternate interpretations, of the many scholars who have delivered the following information in the finest detail for the academic curiosity of those who constitute posterity. This is the tale of the legendary Greek philosopher named Aristotle.

Aristotle was born in the year 384 B.C.E. in the small town of Stagira in Chalcidice, Thrace, on the northern periphery of the ancient Greek world.<sup>1</sup> Son of Nichomachus, a physician in the Macedonian court of King Amyntas II and Phaestis, a woman whose aristocratic roots can be ascribed to the city of Chalcis on the island of Euboea, Aristotle was bred in an atmosphere of material affluence as a result of his lineage. Aristotle's paternal ancestry is composed of an extensive line of medical scholars and kings which discovers its genealogical origins in a group of settlers from the island of Andros. Following Aristotle's birth, his father, Nichomachus, travelled to the old Macedonian capital of Aegae to pursue his own studies and, allegedly being an intelligent and well-cultured man, published several medicinal texts, in addition to one piece on physics, throughout the duration of his career.<sup>2</sup>

Seeing as Aristotle's family was deeply involved in the medicinal arts for generations, it is quite possible that, due to his constant exposure to such an environment in his youth, the common occupation of his predecessors and their extensive utilization of medical knowledge may have exerted a significant influence upon his mode of thinking, thus potentially contributing to his later advocacy of empirical procedure, as opposed to purely speculative ones, to justify his scientific and philosophical findings throughout several fields of human knowledge; this point is of clear significance and must remain in one's consciousness as this analysis proceeds.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.L. Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Anton-Hermann Chroust, *Aristotle: New Light on his Life and on Some of his Works*, Vol. 1 & 2 (Indianapolis, I.N.: University of Notre Dame Press., 1973), p. 74-76.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas P. Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, (New York, N.Y.: Philosophical Library Inc., 1962), p. 3.

However, despite this clear correlation between Aristotle's own work and the occupation of his paternal antecessors, he is said to have once stated that although a man should possess a degree of medical knowledge, he must not stoop so low as to become a medical practitioner; this latter statement seems to imply a certain contempt between Aristotle and his father mixed with an air of superiority and potential rejection of his parent.<sup>4</sup>

Aristotle also had a sister, named Arimneste, and a younger brother, named Arimnestus, the latter of whom died at a young age. Arimneste first married an individual by the name of Demotimus (also referred to as Callisthenes by some ancient sources) with whom she had a daughter named Hero. After Demotimus' death, Arimneste married a man named Proxenus with whom she birthed a son named Nicanor. Arimneste's daughter, Hero, later bore a son named Callisthenes of Olynthus, who was Alexander the Great's famed historian; this would make Arimneste significantly older than Aristotle, seeing as her grandchild was Aristotle's contemporary. Additionally, Proxenus, a native of the city of Atarneus, was possibly an associate of Plato's and may have even been a distant relative of Aristotle's.<sup>5</sup> Regardless, as fate determined it, both Arimneste and Proxenus eventually affected Aristotle's own life in such a way as to necessitate an irrevocable revision in his person; one which facilitated the creation of one of the single most important relationships which Aristotle would ever sustain.

Proxenus, acting in accordance with Nichomachus' will, became Aristotle's legal guardian after his death in accordance and is likely to have been instructed by the posthumous document to take sufficient care of Phaestis (assuming that she was still alive at this juncture) and his three children as well. Proxenus would have also taken care of Nichomachus' estate (which may indicate a possible familial relationship between him and Aristotle) after marrying the then-

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<sup>4</sup> John Ferguson, *Aristotle*, (New York, N.Y.: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 76-79.

young Arimneste. Given Arimneste's substantial seniority to that of her younger brother, it is likely that she became some semblance of a mother figure to him in his young age while Proxenus supplanted the now-vacant position of Nichomachus as Aristotle's custodian. Under the guidance and security of Proxenus, Aristotle commenced a respectable rudimentary education in his youth, possibly due in part to the renowned character of his family both in Stagira and in Macedonia, and may have even studied medicine, in spite of whatever reservations he may have possessed, as a result of his paternal lineage. Additionally, it is reported that Proxenus was the individual to first escort Aristotle to Athens at the age of eight, meaning that Nichomachus, and Phaestes as well, were likely to have already been dead anywhere between the years 376/375 and 367 B.C.E; consequently, one cannot overemphasize the degree to which Arimneste and Proxenus' presence impacted Aristotle's own identity during his most formative years.<sup>6</sup>

Tradition maintains that in the year 367 B.C.E., Proxenus again accompanied Aristotle to Athens, where the former transmitted authority of the young thinker to Plato in the Academy. However, an alternate interpretation asserts that, due to the renowned fame of a rhetorician by the name of Isocrates, Aristotle may have first joined Isocrates' school prior to transferring to the Academy. Isocrates, who once worked with the infamous Gorgias in Thessaly, had become widely-known in Macedonia and the young Aristotle may have encountered his works at an early age, thus succumbing to Isocrates' rhetorical power to such an extent as to pay little attention to Plato's developing Academy. Aristotle's early infatuation with the art of rhetorical speechcraft and political oratory, as is evident in such early works as the "Gryllus" and the "Protrepticus," may serve as indications of an Isocratic influence upon the initial stages of his intellectual growth. Indeed, if this theory is true, then Isocrates' pedagogical impact upon Aristotle may

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 76-79, 92, 100-101.

explain the latter's rich writing style as well his propensity for realism as opposed to that of Plato's more theoretical or idealistic approach to philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the intrigue and attractive allure which such a claim introduces, the fact remains that the theory that Aristotle served as a pupil of Isocrates in his school of rhetoric is little more than inadequate speculation which garners no tangible justification in support of its argument. Indeed, under obsequious scrutiny, the unlikelihood of such an event becomes immediately clear; if one were to adhere to the tradition that Aristotle did enter Plato's Academy in 347 B.C.E., then this would have made him little older than the ripe age of eighteen.<sup>8</sup> Thus, if it is safely established that Aristotle assumed his Platonic tutelage at eighteen, then it is highly improbable that a young thinker whose age preceded that of eighteen by an undisclosed number of years, no matter if he possessed an inherent inclination toward brilliance, could have succeeded or to have even been admitted into the famous Isocratic institution of rhetoric at such a juvenile stage in his life. Also, Proxenus' own relationship with Plato serves as sufficient refutation in relation to the aforementioned claim, for it is extremely implausible that Aristotle would have simply rejected an education in the Academy as a result of the former's fatherly guidance and intimate friendship with the Athenian philosopher.<sup>9</sup>

Regardless of these trivial discrepancies concerning Aristotle's early education, it is generally maintained that he was officially inducted into the Platonic Academy in the year 367 B.C.E. By the time of Aristotle's arrival at Plato's scholarly establishment, Plato himself was absent due to prior engagements with a noteworthy dictator on the Italian island of Sicily; a fact that may have exerted a substantial influence upon the former's own mentality.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 97-98, 100-103.

<sup>8</sup> Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 79.

<sup>10</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 16.

following Plato's return, Aristotle formed a superlative bond with the scholarch of the institution and, despite his later criticisms of his teacher, Aristotle continued to reserve the utmost respect for him as his own intellectual character steadily manifested itself under the watchful direction of his insightful master.<sup>11</sup> It is further evident that, after his arrival in Athens, Aristotle transferred his conception of Proxenus as being his father figure to that of Plato; there is a story that indicates the close relationship between the two, stating that after Plato's audience gradually dissipated during a public reading of the "Phaedo," only Aristotle remained to entertain his instructor.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, the interactions between Aristotle and Plato were imbued with a mutual deference and affection which, in turn, became augmented as the teacher began to realize the ultimate potential of his young student. Plato was so impressed with Aristotle's intelligence that he often taught the young thinker himself as opposed to allowing other instructors in the Academy to do so, as was his policy with other students.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it seems that not only was Plato completely aware of Aristotle's intelligence but that he was also his favorite pupil as well, a fact which enjoys additional support from the endearing title which Plato christened his student with, being "the brain" or "the mind."<sup>14</sup> In light of this, it is clear that these two classical thinkers of antiquity forged a companionship which was marked by sheer interpersonal devotion and unrelenting loyalty.

Although the social intercourse which existed between Aristotle and his aged tutor was ultimately grounded in an unwavering principle of common tenderness, the two thinkers were certainly not without their ideological conflicts from an early stage in Aristotle's life. Based on

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<sup>11</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 104.

<sup>14</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 20.



the authority of several testimonies regarding the issue, it appears that Aristotle seems to have been a young and arrogant student who often sought to challenge the views of his instructor who, by this time, was beginning to fall victim to serious criticisms concerning his Theory of Forms; criticisms which, interestingly enough, resemble Aristotle's own polemical assaults upon his teacher's philosophies later in his intellectual career. In this respect, the relationship between Aristotle and Plato seemed, at times, to be plagued by the stress of the young philosopher's acuity and ability to discern the flaws in his teacher's highly-abstractive and often arbitrary doctrinal theses.<sup>15</sup>

The relatively mild ideological conflicts which occurred between Aristotle and Plato were by no means fatal to their amiable rapport; in fact, Plato's pedagogical technique both admitted and recognized such blatant animadversion in a liberal fashion. Intellectual autonomy was of the highest value in the Platonic Academy and the scholastic institution's history is studded with instances of outright abnegation of a multitude of its central tenants. Aristotle's case was not unique in this particular sense, for both he and Eudoxus were particularly fond of engaging in doctrinal debates regarding a number of Platonic theories, including the Theory of Forms and the role which human pleasure occupied in an individual's life. Thus, there appears to have been a respectable capacity for tolerance in the Platonic Academy concerning ideological diversity and, consequently, Aristotle's own lack of compunction in his attempts to reject certain characteristics of Platonic doctrine, when matched with his ability to deliver a series of cogent counterarguments, may have even stimulated his teacher's respect for his raw intellectual skills and unrefined brilliance.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 15-16, 20.

<sup>16</sup> John Patrick Lynch, *Aristotle's School: A Study of a Greek Educational Institution*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, C.A.: University of California Press, 1972), p. 76-77.

Aristotle's apparent arrogance was not the only peculiar behavioral trait which he possessed as a student of the Platonic Academy. While studying at Plato's institute of philosophy, Aristotle was allegedly known for being an obsessive proponent of literature and was often too busy studying in his own quarters to participate in the theoretical discussions of the Academy, thus prompting Plato to visit him in his abode when the occasion presented itself. Additionally, Aristotle is reported to have been a prolific author during his time at the Academy and to have penned a number of books concerning a variety of subjects; in regards to this, it is believed that Plato once criticized Aristotle for recording so much of his philosophy while the latter assured the former that the material was not meant for, "dilettantes, the ignorant, nor the detractors of philosophy...."<sup>17</sup>

The manifold attributes which distinguished Aristotle from the other pupils of Plato's Academy eventually conferred a multitude of scholastic honors upon his person, one of which was that of instruction in the institution in which he received his own education. It is likely that Aristotle began to teach a course on rhetoric in the Academy which, in turn, may have stemmed from the rivalry between Isocratic and Platonic circles of learning. In this case, Aristotle's course on rhetoric appears to have been a combination of the more practical oratorical strategies of Isocrates and the dialectical style of Plato, thus making dialectics more palatable while simultaneously causing rhetoric to become increasingly legitimized in the field of philosophy. Additionally, Aristotle composed his piece, entitled the "Gryllus" around 360 B.C.E.; the piece was clearly inspired by Plato's work in the "Protagoras," "Gorgias" and "Phaedrus" (with the last of the texts being penned in approximately 369-368 B.C.E.) and served as a blatant attack on a multitude of core convictions advocated by Isocrates and his adherents.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 103-104.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

The publication of the “Gryllus” not only provides a reference for when Aristotle began instructing rhetoric at the Academy but demonstrates the new approach which he adopted in regards to the art of speechcraft; Aristotle replaced the archaic dichotomy of rhetoric and dialectic with a new “expository style,” which, in turn, adopted a new systematic and scientific character, thus permitting a far more progressive digestion of philosophical issues as opposed to the old argument-and-counter-argument style of dialectics. Furthermore, assuming that the “Gryllus” and the “Phaedrus” are accurate references for ascertaining that point of time when Aristotle commenced his instruction of rhetoric in the Academy, then it appears that he did so between 360 and 355 B.C.E.; this assertion is further supported by Isocrates’ “Antidosis,” published in roughly 352 B.C.E., which criticizes Aristotle’s method of instructing rhetoric, meaning that Aristotle must have taught the subject for some time prior to the production of Isocrates’ piece. It is evident that, after 355 B.C.E., Aristotle began to focus exclusively upon philosophical subjects (which is further confirmed by the publication of his early dialogues “On the Good” and “On (the) Ideas” which are generally believed to have been created around 357-356 B.C.E.), thus effectively ending his rhetorical endeavors for a time.<sup>19</sup>

The “Gryllus” represents more than a mere means of determining the time during which Aristotle taught rhetoric at the Academy, for it also inaugurates the first literary, or “exoteric,” period of his work. Aristotle’s works are divided between his early dialogues, designed for the purposes of public consumption, and later treatises (with the latter being delineated between two unequivocal segments in its own right, namely the second and third literary periods). The Aristotelian treatises were initially transferred to a pupil named Theophrastus and were eventually rewarded to an individual named Neleus of Scepsis. Although Neleus’ descendants were in themselves uninterested in Aristotle’s works, they recognized the value which they

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 114-116.

possessed nonetheless and, consequently, hid them from confiscation at the hands of the King of Pergamum by hiding them in a cellar in Scepsis. The Aristotelian treatises were eventually recovered, in a severely damaged condition, by a man by the name of Apellicon who then returned them to Athens. The works were then confiscated by the Romans when Sulla conquered Athens in 86 B.C.E. and then transferred to Rome. After suffering additional ill-treatment, the Aristotelian treatises were finally arranged by one Andronichus of Rhodes and published in the latter portion of the first century B.C.E.<sup>20</sup>

Aristotle's exoteric pieces, however, to which the "Gryllus" itself belongs, met a far worse fate than that of their later counterparts. Those philosophical and scientific works created for the public eye boasted a far less stringent literary style than the Aristotelian treatises, thus allowing them to exude an attractive rhetorical charm which was tailored to the sensitive tastes of the common individual. Of these more stylistically simplistic works, only scant portions of two early pieces, entitled the "Eudemus" and "Protrepticus" remain and are two dialectically-based works which were clearly produced in a manner that is reminiscent of Plato's own writings. In light of this, it may be safely assumed that it was during this early formative period of Aristotle's intellectual development that he most ardently accepted Platonic doctrine as his own, despite whatever reservations he may have expressed in the liberal lecture environment which was afforded by the Platonic Academy.<sup>21</sup>

As is tacitly stated above, the "Gryllus" itself is a lost piece which was composed in dedication of Xenophon's son who died in the battle of Matinea in 362-361 B.C.E. The "Gryllus" concentrated upon rhetoric as an art and appears to have been heavily influenced by

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<sup>20</sup> G.E.R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of his Thought*, (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 10, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 4-5.

Plato's "Gorgias."<sup>22</sup> Due to several statements, supplied by ancient testimony, which claim that a significant period of time expired between Gryllus' death and Aristotle's creation of his text on rhetoric (since it is reported that a multitude of rhetorical texts produced for the purposes of commemorating Xenophon's son were published prior to Aristotle's own work), it may therefore be argued that it was penned in approximately 360 B.C.E. or some time afterward and, assuming that the "Gryllus" was the first piece published by the thinker, then it may further be concluded that the text was composed during Aristotle's eighth or ninth year at the Academy whenever he was either twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. It must further be mentioned, however, that while it appears that the "Gryllus" was Aristotle's first major publication, the young philosopher reserved no compunction in his criticisms of a number of the greatest and most notorious rhetoricians of the time.<sup>23</sup>

The Aristotelian "Gryllus" was specifically designed as an instrument for the refutation of those rhetorical texts which preceded his own in the commemoration of Xenophon's deceased son. In the "Gryllus," Aristotle explicitly denounces those strains of speechcraft which are fundamentally obsequious in nature and seizes the opportunity which Gryllus' death supplies to launch a direct attack upon the central doctrines of those schools which supported these conceptions of utilitarian persuasion. The objective of Aristotle's "Gryllus," therefore, seems to be twofold in its attack against those rhetoricians and teachers of persuasive skill whose behavior stained the image of the true art of speechcraft and its simultaneous defense of a genuine, Platonic form of rhetoric (similar to that discovered in the "Gorgias" and "Phaedrus"). Finally, it also seems likely that Aristotle's "Gryllus" included a thorough examination of the types of rhetoric which could most properly be defined as legitimate, so that it may serve as a

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<sup>22</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 29-30.

pedagogical device in addition to its role as a polemical piece against the unauthentic versions of persuasion.<sup>24</sup>

If Aristotle's "Gryllus" was indeed a polemical piece geared toward the refutation of the obsequious rhetoric of a number of prominent rhetoricians of the day, then it is incredibly likely that the text attacked the renowned Isocrates as well who, in turn, was sure to have participated in the flattery of the Xenophon in the name of the deceased Gryllus. In fact, it may even be argued that the condemnation contained within the "Gryllus" was primarily intended for Isocrates in particular which, if true, would mean that piece existed as a portion of the notable amount of anti-Isocratic literature which was produced by both Plato and a number of other members of the Academy during the period. Thus, Aristotle's "Gryllus" may represent the first piece of literature in his infamous literary conflict with Isocrates and his followers; a conflict which is commonly believed to have continued on into Aristotle's "Protrepticus" and perhaps even into his "Politicus."<sup>25</sup>

Although the bulk of its contents have failed to endure the test of time, several ancient sources, most of which were arranged as rebuttals to Aristotle's work, do supply contemporary scholars with diluted fragments of that information which composed the "Gryllus." It appears as though Aristotle not only provided a rationale in support of one's interest in rhetoric and political oratory but did so while concurrently forwarding a defense of philosophy proper and a venomous literary assailment of a select sample of his contemporaries (e.g., the Isocratic school), thus employing an overt assault upon both politicians and rhetoricians alike in the piece. Additionally, following Aristotle's chastisement of a particular class of individuals whose fame and distasteful behavior allowed them to become subject to such vehement criticism, he proceeded to advance a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 32-33.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 33-34.

prescriptive admonition to those members of Greek youth whose intent was to enter the political realm; in this regard, Aristotle seems to have first forewarned these interested individuals to avoid the pursuit of practical knowledge and political office exclusively, for, by doing so, one would fail to delve into certain crucial subsidiary studies while, alternatively, if one refrained from allocating his attention to the more pragmatic aspects of education, one would not grow into an adequate political officer less he concentrate upon his studies for a substantial duration of time.<sup>26</sup>

The arguments expounded within the Aristotelian “Gryllus” are, in themselves, a manifestation of the larger academic and ideological entanglement which had erupted between the school of Isocrates and Plato’s Academy. Indeed, in spite of Plato’s radical advocacy of a purely abstractive approach to education, the intellectual activities of the sophists (such as those who were blatantly rejected in Plato’s “Protagoras” and “Gorgias”) continued to influence and insinuate themselves into the academic culture of ancient Greece. In light of this, it must be further mentioned that the Isocratic circle was not only notorious for offering a variety of severe criticism of Platonism through its attack upon Plato’s staunch promotion of theoretical rumination but was also famous for its version of a literary humanism which accepted a tangible conception of human life and appeared to be diametrically opposed to the deeply philosophical and abstract conception of reality that was advocated by the Platonists. This visible contention between the practical doctrines of Isocrates and the theoretical values of Plato formed one of the greatest intellectual conflicts of the fourth century B.C.E.; a conflict which was further exacerbated by the successful reputation and impressive swell in enrollment in the school of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 37-39.

Isocrates as it became increasingly renowned for its quality both throughout the Greek world and beyond the Hellenic spectrum of existence.<sup>27</sup>

It is, therefore, evident that the eulogy of the fallen Gryllus (as well as the subsequent flattery of Xenophon) by Isocrates provided Aristotle with the perfect opportunity to include his own name in the ranks of debaters in what may have been the greatest battle between the most prominent intellectual minds of the period. The Aristotelian “Gryllus” may have represented the young philosopher’s first attempt to participate in the ideological struggle between the Platonic and Isocratic schools as well as a chance to contravene the latter in the name of Platonism. Thus, it is likely that Aristotle’s attempt to fulfill the role of champion for the Academy was a scholarly duty which demanded the fullest extent of the young thinker’s enthusiasm and zeal, for if the objective of the “Gryllus” proved to be a success, then Aristotle was sure to have not only been richly rewarded with a significant amount of attention from his academic colleagues but also the admiration and gratitude of his teacher. Thus, with the possibility of further perpetuating the philosophy of the Academy and the work of his fellow academics on the line, it is clear that the young Aristotle could not refuse the temptation to attempt to refute the fundamental principles of the Isocratic school of thought.<sup>28</sup>

While serving as the pure quintessence of the formation of Aristotle’s thought during his time at the Platonic Academy, the “Gryllus” was not unaccompanied in this respect. Yet another piece, entitled the “Eudemus” or “On the Soul,” of which a far greater portion has survived annihilation at the hands of history, was dedicated to his friend and associate, named Eudemus of Cyprus, and was clearly modeled after the Platonic “Phaedo.”<sup>29</sup> This early Aristotelian text includes a tale concerning Eudemus who, while travelling to Macedonia, arrived at the city of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 39-40.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 24-25.



Pherae in Thessaly which, in turn, was then subjugated to the control of a notorious tyrant by the name of Alexander of Pherae. The story of Eudemus continues on, stating that during his stay in the city, he was struck by a sudden and potentially fatal illness which resisted all of the physicians' attempts to eliminate the sickness which had infected him.<sup>30</sup>

According to the tale of Eudemus, while experiencing a high fever which he contracted as a result of his ailment, he was visited by a spectral entity which revealed a prophecy to him; the figure not only informed Eudemus that his health would be restored after several days but that Alexander of Pherae would also die and he, Eudemus, would be permitted to return to his home on Cyprus within a span of five years' time.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly enough, the story states that Eudemus overcame his illness and that Alexander of Pherae was killed (apparently assassinated in 359-358 B.C.E. by his wife and brothers) after the apparition's prophecy. In addition to this, the prophecy was entirely fulfilled when Eudemus himself was killed in combat five years later in 354-353 B.C.E. during a battle outside the city of Syracuse on the Italian island of Sicily and was then returned home; not home to his native place of origin on Cyprus (as Eudemus had surely expected prior to his unfortunate and untimely death) but instead to his true home in the afterlife. Thus, in light of this final, enigmatic twist to Eudemus' tale, it appears that the main character of the Aristotelian text did return home, being the ideal home of the human soul which, in turn, is a concept which exists harmoniously with Platonic doctrine.<sup>32</sup>

The events which comprise the political atmosphere of Eudemus' death further assist contemporary scholars in their efforts to determine the precise year in which the Aristotelian text was produced. It appears that roughly in June of 354 B.C.E., Dion, who had ascended to throne in Syracuse after successfully removing Dionysius the Younger from power, was assassinated by

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<sup>30</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 43-44.

<sup>31</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 43-44.

an individual who had once attended the Platonic Academy by the name of Callipus. Consequently, a number of supporters in favor of Dion's capture of power in Syracuse, who (understandably) displayed a significant degree of animosity and contempt for Callipus and his followers, attempted to recapture the city from the tyrannical domination of the newly-established dictator; the famed Eudemus, for whom the Aristotelian text was designed, was a staunch proponent of Dion and was killed in approximately 354 or (more likely) 353 B.C.E. while engaging the forces of Callipus. If the above date is accepted as being correct and Eudemus did indeed fall in battle in the year 353 B.C.E., then it may be further assumed with a fair degree of accuracy that news of his death would have reached Athens in roughly late 353 or 352 B.C.E., thus resulting in the composition of the Aristotelian "Eudemus" in roughly 352 B.C.E. or soon after that date.<sup>33</sup>

In the "Eudemus" itself, Aristotle adapts several Platonic concepts to his own to form an amalgamated theory of the human soul which, ultimately, is a reflection of the influence which the core convictions of the Academy imposed upon his thought. Aristotle argues in his piece that, before birth and after death, the soul perceives "souls, forms and spiritual beings," thus accepting and asserting a theory which is similar to Plato's Theory of Forms in a manner which Plato himself did not explicitly state in the "Phaedo."<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the argument that the individual is indeed susceptible to information about the future while he or she sleeps or exists on the threshold of life and death which Aristotle seems to expound in the "Eudemus" is delivered by means of an analysis of the soul's relationship with the physical body and asserts that the individual is capable of a certain degree of transcended foresight and of receiving visual images of the afterlife whenever the soul enters a state of total "separation" from the body in death or a

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 44-45.

<sup>34</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 25.

state of “semi-separation” while the respective individual is asleep. This theory concerning the soul which, provided by Aristotle in the “Eudemus,” is identical to a concept, called “metempsychosis,” which occupied a position in the common belief system of many ancient Greek scholars (e.g., Pythagoras and Plato) and is clearly Platonic, thus resulting in the assumption that Aristotle’s “Eudemus” accepts an approach to the human soul similar to that of Plato’s and which is parallel to the doctrine forwarded by the latter in the “Phaedo.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the topic of the relationship which is maintained between the human soul and its body, the Aristotelian “Eudemus” produces another thoroughly Platonic argument, stating that, upon dying, the soul returns to its point of origin and rightful place in the afterlife where it experiences an existence of eternal bliss and that, in contrast, the human body is a sickened and imperfect structure which prevents the soul from returning to its ideal state of being in the underworld. This outright adoption of Platonic philosophy in the Aristotelian “Eudemus” is, however, to be expected since, being dedicated to the memory of a close friend and academic peer, the piece could not refrain from depicting one’s final end in a positive perspective through its illustration of death as existing as nothing other than an avenue for the soul’s liberation from the condemnation of the body.<sup>36</sup>

With this in mind, the objective of the Aristotelian “Eudemus” becomes immediately clear: the text, which is dedicated to an individual who accepted an honorable fate, is an inquiry into the nature of life and death in an attempt to not only alleviate the despair of losing a soul so noble as that of Eudemus but to also attribute a positive character to death itself in an effort to rightly justify his passage into the afterlife and to produce an increasingly stoic conception of this experience. The Aristotelian “Eudemus,” therefore, was but an instrument in the

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<sup>35</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 45-46.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

commemoration of the deceased associate who bears the same name and, in its effort to instill a comfortable sense of security in regards to his death, it remains highly probable that Aristotle attempted to fulfill this aim by utilizing the Platonic “Phaedo,” which seeks the attainment of a very similar end through its commemoration to the expired Socrates, as a literary model of sorts.<sup>37</sup>

The unequivocal Platonic elements in the Aristotelian “Eudemus” do, however, admit an extensive degree of disparity between the theories expounded in the piece itself and the central values which Aristotle supported in his later life. In fact, absolutely contrary to his claim in the “Eudemus” that the human psyche is capable of apprehending some amount of knowledge in regard to the afterlife or mystical prescience while in a state of quasi-consciousness is Aristotle’s argument in his later treatise, entitled “De Divinatione Per Somnum” or “On Prophesying by Dreams”; in this text, Aristotle explicitly states that those dreams which are interpreted as prophecy are often little more than the combination of the physical body’s hypersensitivity during such an altered condition of cognitive being and empirical phenomenon whose ability to be received by the sensibility of the individual is allowed to operate unimpeded as a result of the composition of the night air.<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, although Aristotle vaguely alludes to his antiquated theory concerning the human soul’s passage into the afterlife in the initial segment of his later piece, called “De Anima” or “On the Soul,” he also adopts a distinct theory in regard to this matter as well, advancing the claim that only a specific portion of the soul, namely the human intellect, possesses the capacity for immortality while any remaining fragments are subject to

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 46, 53.

<sup>38</sup> Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, (New York, N.Y.: Random House, Inc., 1941), p. 628-629.

destruction.<sup>39</sup> In light of this clear incongruity between Aristotle's philosophical values, it is obvious that during the creation of the "Eudemus," he was not only engrossed in the literary technique of Platonism itself but was swayed by the philosophical theories of the Academy as well.

One final exoteric text which is revelatory of Aristotle's intellectual notions during his time at the Academy is that of the "Protrepticus." Aristotle's "Protrepticus" was created as a dedication to Prince Themison of Cyprus whose character, although enigmatic to contemporary scholars, appears to have been one defined by unbridled intellectualism and political authoritarianism which, in turn, was sure to have exerted a conspicuous degree of influence upon the world of Hellenistic Greece. In addition to Aristotle's own work, Isocrates was also known to have maintained a fairly intimate correspondence with the Cyprians, in which he expounded a multitude of supplemental recommendations concerning proper governance; such activity is indicative of a common practice among Greek schools of the fourth century, namely, the accumulation of prestige in regard to the greatest political interests of the period in a manner which not only promoted significant conflict between the many academic institutions but which sought to utilize such prominence to further their own values and designs via obsequious interaction. In light of this, although it is uncertain whether Aristotle established his own relationship with the Cyprian royalty through his associate Eudemus, whose native land was the same island, it may be safely assumed that the objective of the "Protrepticus" served the very same end as Isocrates' own endeavors; Aristotle's text was primarily designed for the purposes of perpetuating the political prominence of the Platonic pedagogy.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 592.

<sup>40</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press., 1934), p. 54.

The Aristotelian “Protrepticus” begins with an explicit address of Themison’s person, in which Aristotle emphasizes the political power of the latter, stating that such a position is what permitted one to be particularly receptive to the exercise of moral philosophy. Aristotle’s expressions in the beginning portions of the “Protrepticus” are not merely advanced in order to capture the interest of an individual who maintained a state of authority over a renowned domain but is quintessential of Platonic doctrine as well; in regard to this, the prevailing notion of the Platonic Academy was that of the “Philosopher/King” or the belief that the ideal political state (or one identical to it) could only be truly realized in corporeal existence if such a system of human social organization could be founded, and subsequently directed, by enlightened despots whose true aim was the collective attainment of The Good by the societies which they ruled. Thus, the Aristotelian “Protrepticus” was not created for the exclusive purpose of advancing the reputation of the Platonic Academy but was also an attempt to introduce Platonic theory into reality through such an individual as Themison.<sup>41</sup>

The primary assertion advanced in the Aristotelian “Protrepticus” revolves around the thesis that abstractive knowledge not only possesses its own value inherently but supplies humanity with the necessary prerequisites in the attainment of an ideal existence. Following Aristotle’s presentation of this argument, he proceeds to further justify his claims by citing several metaphors which are relevant to his stated hypothesis; the first analogy which Aristotle utilizes to legitimize his argument is that of a medical physician or gymnastic trainer who, in turn, must possess that abstractive and intangible knowledge regarding the innate order and operation of human existence in such a manner as to perform their respective arts sufficiently. Aristotle also states that the political officer must possess the very same genus of knowledge as the medical physician and the gymnastic trainer in order to govern his domain adequately; in

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 54-55.

fact, the politician must be even more acquainted with such a concept than that of the others since the degree of significance with which his social position and personal behavior are imbued far exceeds that of the latter as a result of the very nature of the former's occupation.<sup>42</sup>

Both philosophical and practical knowledge, as they are related within the contents of the Aristotelian "Protrepticus," demand an analogous method through which they are acquired. Thus, while the pragmatic artisan derives his inspiration from the various substances which constitute physical reality, which according to Platonic theory is but an instantiated manifestation of ideality, only abstractive rumination enables an individual to discern the realm of transcended, perfect forms upon which the whole of human experience is predicated, thus meaning that philosophy and the contemplative life are the only avenues which permit one the ability to apprehend ideality per se.<sup>43</sup>

In regards to the last point, Aristotle states that the political official's power to discern prime, transcended reality is comparable to the mason or carpenter's employment of mathematical proofs or quantitative reasoning to erect a physical structure as opposed to their mediocre replication of those dimensions possessed by a pre-existing building; thus, in the same manner in which the inadequate mason or carpenter produces little more than an inauthentic version of an original structure, the political officer who formulates his mandate in a manner which is absolutely identical to those created by his peers, therefore, establishes a political system which is inferior to theirs; this very same rationale is applicable to every aspect of human reality as it is conceived by Platonic doctrine, meaning that, for instance, an ersatz manifestation of beauty is not legitimately beautiful per se in a sense which is ontologically equivalent to any phenomenon that is fundamentally mutable (i.e., equally susceptible to generation as well as

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<sup>42</sup> Ingemar Düring and G.E.L. Owen, ed., *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century*, (Gothenburg, S.E.: University of Goteborg Press, 1960), p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

destruction) and which exists in a state that, by virtue of itself, lacks the capacity to maintain total permanence in response to temporal change.<sup>44</sup>

The Aristotelian “Protrepticus” was, therefore, a piece which clearly integrated several aspects of Platonic doctrine (e.g., the Theory of Forms, the Philosopher/King theory, etc.) in an ultimate effort to disseminate the philosophical ideas of the Academy; such an effective means of communicating Plato’s theories was not, however, introduced into the intellectual sphere without incurring fierce reprisal from certain elements of the community at large. Indeed, the contention which was cultivated between the Platonic and Isocratic schools of thought, first due to the “Gryllus” and later as a result of the Aristotelian “Protrepticus,” was further exacerbated by the piece’s overt rejection of a number of principles which were central to the philosophy of the latter, such as the assertion that the sole purpose of obtaining knowledge was purely discovered in the immediate benefits which it yielded, as well as the texts’ vindictive response to criticisms previously advanced by Isocratic scholars against the Platonic method of instruction via theoretical reflection.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in this sense, the Aristotelian “Protrepticus” was, yet again, a continuation of the struggle which existed between Plato and Isocrates’ pedagogical institutions. Unlike the “Gryllus,” however, the Aristotelian “Protrepticus” was delivered with a stylistic and cognitive maturity which was absent in the former and, consequently, exhibits the genius which had flowered in the young thinker during his studies in the Academy.

The three exoteric works addressed above are expressions of a fundamental era of Aristotle’s intellectual development in which his fertile mind expanded at an unprecedented rate, thus ultimately culminating in the brilliance which eventually became tempered with age and enriched with introspective, as well as scientific, thought. While Aristotle’s scholastic character

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>45</sup> Jaeger, *Aristotle*, p. 57-58.



during his time at the Academy was firmly Platonic, his early texts, in addition to those ancient testimonies which depict him as brandishing the sharp implements of his critical mind indiscriminately, certainly indicate the level of independence which he exercised in the formation of his own thought throughout his elementary education under Plato. Additionally, the pressures yielded by literary and academic opposition between the Isocratic and Platonic circles certainly served as an imperative contributing factor in the growth of Aristotle's compositional and rhetorical style as well as the expansion of his rational capacities in a manner that cannot be underestimated. Thus, the zealous youth who entered the Platonic Academy was sure to have departed from the educational establishment as an intelligent and insightful man, prepared to unveil the axiomatic principles of the reality which existed around his own. The pleasures of unfettered intellectual inquiry must, however, always reach its conclusion and it was soon after the publication of his final exoteric works that Aristotle discovered his own end.

After conducting his education and initial work in the Platonic Academy for roughly twenty years, Plato's death in the spring of 348-347 B.C.E. at the respectable age of eighty or eighty-one prompted Aristotle's sudden, and purportedly urgent, emigration from Athens in the very same year. Tradition maintains that Aristotle's justification for leaving Athens was primarily the result of his rejection as the successor of the Platonic Academy; indeed, Plato's nephew, Speusippus, was conferred the honor of ascending to the position of scholarch in the Platonic institution, thus compelling Aristotle as well as his friend and peer, Xenocrates, (both of whom regarded the former as an individual whose philosophical talents and interests were significantly lacking) to sever their social and academic ties with the new administrator of Plato's school as well as the pedagogical establishment itself.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 117, 123-124.

The above theory concerning the motivations which dictated both Aristotle and Xenocrates' behavior, however, is undermined by a long-standing Athenian law of succession which existed prior to Plato's death and was likely to have determined the posthumous allocation of his corporeal assets. Athenian jurisprudence during this period mandated that all rights of succession, upon the death of the original individual, were to be distributed to his nearest relative. Thus, being the son of Plato's sister, Speusippus' inheritance of the Academy was an inevitability under Athenian protocol, meaning that both Aristotle and Xenocrates would have been wholly familiar with this fact well before Plato's death. It immediately follows, therefore, that the probability that Aristotle's deeds were the product of his own envy and vindictive response to Speusippus' acceptance of the regulatory reigns of the Platonic Academy is virtually nil, given the common knowledge which all members of the Athenian population, regardless of their level of citizenry, possessed during this period regarding the transmission of land ownership between familial interests.<sup>47</sup>

The puzzling circumstances which surround Aristotle's flight from Athens may be further clarified by means of a general examination of his ethnic, cultural and legal status in the famed Greek polis. Although "firmly Greek," Aristotle arrived and lived in Athens as a "resident alien" of sorts and could be clearly distinguished from the Athenians both in physical appearance, which allegedly enjoyed a perpetual state of cleanliness and order, as well as personal behavior and physical mannerisms. Aristotle's foreign birth in the more-remote Stagira also seemed to instill a natural inclination toward the stable Macedonian kingdom to the north which, when contrasted with the instability of the feuding Greek cities in the south, is likely to have established an irrevocable sense of identity with the former within the philosopher from a young age. As a result, Aristotle's opponents often capitalized upon his seemingly-alien character; a

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

character which, despite its negative aspects, is certain to have allowed him, unlike his Athenian counterparts, to maintain a thoroughly objective and culturally unbiased perspective of human reality throughout the duration of his time in the city.<sup>48</sup>

Aristotle's Stagirin attributes and Macedonian conception of reality not only caused him to fall victim to social alienation but also subordinated him to the Athenians as a result of legal prejudice. In this respect, the claim that Aristotle withdrew his presence from the domain of the Athenians due to his animosity toward Speusippus and the Academy itself for their apparent act of negligence in regard to his selection as Plato's successor remains unsubstantiated on the grounds of one extremely critical reality concerning his legal status: as a result of his foreign birth, Aristotle was not a recognized citizen of Athens, meaning that, under the directives of the Athenian government, he was not only prohibited from owning property in the region himself but was also prevented from receiving said property.<sup>49</sup> Thus, given the restrictive legal mandates which were administered by the Athenian government during the period in question, it may be safely concluded that Aristotle's desire to leave Athens was not born from indignation but necessity.

While a decomposition in his relationship with the Platonic Academy may not serve as the ultimate cause for his flight from Athens, Aristotle's alien status was in fact the sole determinant which motivated his behavior; in this respect, an overview of the political climate of the period is necessary. In 349 B.C.E., the regent of Macedon and son of King Amyntas II, Philip II, was increasingly becoming a formidable military threat to the whole of southern Greece, thus necessitating the creation of a military and commercial alliance between the Greek city of

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<sup>48</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 14-15.

<sup>49</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 30-31.

Olynthus and Athens.<sup>50</sup> Thus, when in 348 B.C.E., the same year in which Plato is believed to have expired, Philip of Macedon sacked the Greek city of Olynthus, thus causing a dismayed Athenian population to object in an uproarious spectacle and establishing an environment of social and political upheaval in Athens.<sup>51</sup> The civil disorder which erupted in Athens was harnessed and directed by a certain Athenian politician by the name of Demosthenes who, being a staunch advocate of Athenian independence and an unconcealed renouncer of Philip's military transgressions, channeled the acrimony of the populace in such a manner as to introduce a prevailing ideology of xenophobia within the confines of the city's domain.<sup>52</sup>

It is evident that Aristotle, a resident Stagirin whose parents had not only served the Macedonian court but may have also frequented the Macedonian capital of Pella, was soon to serve as a natural target of the rage of Athens and is likely to have quickly become the victim of xenophobia and widespread distrust by the Athenians.<sup>53</sup> Thus, seeing as Aristotle's only remaining tie to Athens was embodied in the frail Plato, who, in turn, died and was forced to award the ownership of his school to Speusippus, the incentives which regulated and determined Aristotle's actions are quickly elucidated; given a hostile environment in the absence of any genuine protection, Aristotle's decision to flee from Athens was indeed dictated by necessity.<sup>54</sup> Aristotle's passage through the final threshold of being a youthful adherent of Platonic philosophy to that of unmitigated independence was, therefore, a dangerous one, comprised of malicious slander, radical alienation and the potential for physical violence; the affects which such a chain of events were likely to have imposed upon his psyche are sure to have been profound.

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<sup>50</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 121-122.

<sup>51</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 94-95.

<sup>52</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 121-122.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 20.

At the very least, the traumatic encounter which Aristotle experienced in relation to the unconstrained Athenian masses certainly led to an irreversible sense of cynicism with respect to his conception of human collective behavior throughout his political and social philosophy. In his later work pertaining to these subjects, Aristotle is quick to present his reservations concerning popular sovereignty and exhibits little conscious in renouncing democracy as a sociopolitical philosophy. Indeed, in his piece, entitled the “Politics,” Aristotle illustrates the process through which a democracy quickly transforms into mob rule in which the masses, who possess unlimited authority, undermine the fundamental laws of a just state and, acting collectively as a single conglomerated interest, revise the foundational constitution of the body politic to such an extent as to accommodate their own designs at the expense of society as a whole. Such a democracy, as Aristotle relates, is utterly indistinguishable from the worst form of tyranny, for in such a sociopolitical environment, the popular masses reign supreme above the constraints of the law and, in doing so, are permitted the ability to abuse the society at large at their will.<sup>55</sup> This conclusion, as portrayed by Aristotle, is undoubtedly derived from the thinker’s own exposure to the lawless endeavors which may potentially be assumed by an unruly populace as well as those injustices which are often perpetuated by the popular masses as a result.

Following Aristotle’s hasty departure from Athens, he travelled to the Greek city of Assos where he was entertained by the region’s monarch, King Hermias of Atarneus. Aristotle’s selection of Assos as the location which would accommodate the destination of his retreat was the final result of the physical, financial and intellectual security which such a climate offered the then thirty-eight-year-old scholar. Indeed, in respect to this, not only were Aristotle’s expectations derived from the intimate relationship which apparently existed between Proxenus, Aristotle’s “guardian” and older brother-in-law, and Hermias, the former’s fellow countryman,

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<sup>55</sup> McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, p. 1212-1213.

but from the fact that two students of the Academy and natives of the Greek city of Scepsis with whom Aristotle was acquainted, named Erastus and Corsicus, were equally present in Assos and, following Plato's death, were occupied advisory positions within Hermias' court. Thus, Assos was likely to have been the ideal location for the destination of Aristotle's flight from Athens since it not only provided him with a slew of close associates but also the personal refuge and academic freedom which he desired as well.<sup>56</sup>

After arriving in Assos under invitation from Hermias, Aristotle was granted the ability to establish his own Platonic circle under the economic and political protection of the king; it was here that Aristotle began the independent instruction and dissemination of his own philosophical principles.<sup>57</sup> Although it is evident that, while in Assos, Aristotle surrounded himself with ex-pupils and associates of the Platonic Academy, the affect which these lecture circles and the intensive exposure to such individuals in an external, non-Academic environment exerted upon Aristotle's conception of proper instructional technique is unclear. It appears that the Platonic brotherhood which existed in Hermias' capital in Assos conducted, at least prior to the arrival of Aristotle, a plethora of duties which are quintessential of an advisory body as opposed to being an entity which emphasized the continued perpetuation of the intellectual growth of Greek youth.<sup>58</sup>

The presence of Aristotle (and perhaps Xenocrates), however, resulted in a reformation of the behavior assumed by the Platonic circle in the court of Assos from that of exclusively political and administrative advisement to philosophical reflection and intellectual stimulation; in regards to the new concentration upon theoretical issues which was introduced by Aristotle, it is reported by ancient testimony that the study of literature in addition to the promotion of

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<sup>56</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 119.

<sup>57</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 71-72.

abstractive inquiry flourished within Hermias' domain. While it is clear that Aristotle's nephew, Callisthenes, received instruction at this tentative school of philosophy in Assos and that several research projects were conducted during this period, there still remains little valid evidence to support any theory which may be produced in an attempt to further reveal the fundamental scholastic operations which occurred under Hermias' political authority. However, further insight into the affairs of the philosophical school at Assos, provided by Aristotle's later biological texts, reveal that an extensive amount of information used within these pieces was compiled during his time in this region as well as other locations throughout the Aegean, such as the island of Lesbos.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to the educational activities which Aristotle pursued during his time in Assos, it is also clear that it was within this particular era of his life that he married his wife, Pythias.<sup>60</sup> Pythias was either the daughter, niece, sister or perhaps adopted child of King Hermias of Atarneus and probably first became affiliated with Aristotle due to her association with the regent of Assos. Since it is reported that Aristotle married Pythias out of pity for the death of her protector, Hermias, at the hands of the Persians, it may further be assumed that the two must have married between the years 341-340 B.C.E., well after their first meeting during Aristotle's stay in Assos between 347 and 345-344 B.C.E. Regardless of the conditions of their union, it is further evident that, since Aristotle requested in his last will and testament that he be buried with Pythias, it is assumed that the relationship between the two was a joyous one. Pythias died sometime after 337 B.C.E. but before 322 B.C.E., since she is believed to have expired soon after the birth of her daughter, Pythias.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 20-21.

<sup>61</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 81-82.

Aristotle's daughter, Pythias, was born sometime after 337 B.C.E., possibly in Macedonia, and was approximately thirteen or fourteen years of age when her father died in 322 B.C.E. Pythias married Nicanor, the son of Arimneste and Proxenus, sometime following the year 322 B.C.E. In 317 B.C.E., however, Nicanor was executed by Cassander, thus leaving no children, or male children for that matter, to survive him. Pythias then married a man by the name of Procles (or Procleus) after Nicanor's death and birthed two sons by him, name Procles (or Procleus) and Demartus. After Procles, Pythias' husband, died, the latter was then joined in wedded union with a man named Medias (also known as Metrodorous) with whom she birthed yet another son, named Aristotle, in the last decade of the fourth century B.C.E. Aristotle, son of Pythias and Medias and grandson of the original Aristotle, was probably a minor member of the Peripatetic school in the Lyceum and was mentioned in Theophrastus' last will and testament as well.<sup>62</sup>

Remaining within the hospitable stewardship of Hermias of Atarneus for three years, Aristotle relinquished his respectable pedagogical position in the Platonic circle in Assos and proceeded to the city of Mitylene on the island of Lesbos where he became acquainted with his most prominent student and eventual successor, Theophrastus.<sup>63</sup> It was also during this time that Aristotle's secondary literary period commenced, in which the thinker abandoned his rhetorical approach to philosophy and began to utilize more empirical methods as opposed to the theoretical and speculative techniques which characterized his first literary period in Plato's Academy. Indeed, it was during this second epoch in Aristotle's intellectual development that he began to explicitly criticize the philosophical views of the Platonists, thus rejecting the concept of the existence of a distinct realm of ideal Forms and advancing several refutations of the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 3.



allegedly false dichotomy to which Plato believed that the two fundamental components of human existence, form and matter, conformed to. Indeed, in contrast to the latter theory, Aristotle forwarded his own conception of human reality during his second literary period which claimed that the two elements of existence, form and matter, were utterly intertwined in an indistinct manner, thus forming the singular and whole phenomena which constitute human being.<sup>64</sup>

The second literary period of Aristotle's work also witnessed the inauguration of a number of other central concepts of the thinker's philosophy; it was during these travels that Aristotle distanced himself from Platonism and began to develop his own doctrines and metaphysics which included, but is most certainly not limited to, his Theory of the Four Causes of physical reality and his thesis concerning material and formal substance.<sup>65</sup> It was also during this time that Aristotle penned his piece entitled "On Philosophy" in which he not only actively sought to abnegate Plato's Theory of Forms or Ideas but in which he purportedly introduced a primitive manifestation of his concept of the unmoved mover (which is a single entity, rather than the pluralistic version described in his later text, called the "Metaphysics"), during this intermediate stage of his thought. Additionally, Aristotle also proposed a notion of the existence of the divine by means of examining the incremental gradation of perfection in physical phenomena (which, in turn, is a concept later adopted in the fourth way of St. Thomas Aquinas' systemization of reality) and also denounces the Platonic theory concerning the origins of existence, as it is elaborated in Plato's "Timaeus," and argues in favor of the interminable quality of the world in his text.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Lloyd, *Aristotle*, p. 20-21.

<sup>66</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 7-8.

Besides his piece “On Philosophy,” it appears as though the original version, as well as select portions, of his later text, entitled the “Metaphysics,” discover their seminal beginnings in this period of Aristotle’s intellectual development, along with a number of complete works, such as (in accordance with the claims of some) the “Eudemian Ethics” and several sections of other writings, which not only include the “De Generatione et Corruptione” or “On Generation and Corruption” but may also be comprised of those segments of his later piece on “Politics” which pertain to his conception of the ideal political state as well.<sup>67</sup> In addition to the formation of these pivotal theories of his philosophy, it is also believed that the bulk of Aristotle’s work on marine biology occurred in this region as well; a fact which is evident in the thinker’s text, entitled “History of Animals,” in which he advances several unambiguous references to various regions around the Aegean such as Assos, Mitylene and Pyrrha in Asia Minor within the piece itself.<sup>68</sup> This intermediary era of Aristotle’s life, therefore, serves as testament to the exceptional evolution of the philosopher’s mode of thinking and methods of collecting and scrutinizing empirical and speculative data as well as the interests and idiosyncratic inclinations which eventually came to define his person; in this respect, it may be further concluded that Aristotle’s time in Assos and Mitylene form an indispensable segment of his being which, in the general scheme of his intellectual development, demands the most conscientious perusal of the curious scholar.

Having obtained a substantial amount of credibility among the many academic circles of the ancient Greek world, Aristotle’s notable reputation resulted in his invitation by the then Macedonian King, Philip II, to personally instruct his thirteen-year-old son, Alexander, in the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 20-21.

Macedonian capital of Pella in 342 B.C.E.<sup>69</sup> Upon travelling to Macedonia to educate the young Alexander, King Philip established a center of scholasticism in the nymphaeum of the city in order to accommodate the studies of his heir to the throne; indeed, this very area continued to admit tourists throughout the second century A.D., thus exhibiting the sheer importance with which the location was imbued following Aristotle's instruction of the Macedonian prince. It also appears that, on authority of several ancient sources, the education offered by Aristotle in Pella shares several qualities which are analogous to the pedagogical endeavors of the Academy and, to some extent, the Platonic circle in Assos. Ultimately, however, proper elaboration upon the matter of Alexander's tutelage in the nymphaeum of Pella is impossible due to an absence of adequate information concerning these proceedings.<sup>70</sup>

Although little substantive evidence exists in order to derive many justifiable conclusions with regard to this specific epoch in Aristotle's life, contemporary scholars are, however, relatively knowledgeable with regard to the specific attitudes which both he and the young Macedonian prince harbored. It is evident that Aristotle could not have provided a meaningful education to Alexander, seeing that the young Macedonian heir became preoccupied with the affairs of the political state by 340 B.C.E. Indeed, it was common for Aristotle's political studies to be concentrated on the events of the past while Alexander seemed to be far more concerned with the political atmosphere of the future. As a result, Aristotle most likely had little, if any, influence on Alexander's mode of thinking or personal demeanor.<sup>71</sup> It may, therefore, be inquired as to whom it was that molded the young Alexander in such a manner as to cause him to become master of the known world, and beyond for that matter, shortly following Aristotle's guidance of the Macedonian prince.

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<sup>69</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 3-4.

<sup>70</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 72-73.

<sup>71</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 21.

Archaic reports indicate that Alexander received instruction from two other tutors, Leonidas (who is purported to have been a kinsman to Alexander's mother, Olympias) and one Lysimachus the Arcanian. Apparently, Leonidas was a strict educator who taught Alexander to endure physical hardship and privation while Lysimachus seemed to not only be more lax in his approach but, in turn, lacked intellectual refinement on his own accord. Additionally, the latter is also claimed to have liked to "compare himself to the Homeric Phoenix, King Philip to Peleus and Alexander to Achilles." Furthermore, it seems as though Alexander's own shortcomings were not the result of Aristotle's instruction but were, in reality, due to the young Macedonian's previous masters. Both Leonidas and Lysimachus are stated to have been the cause for Alexander's later lack of moral reasoning and emotional instability as well as his "inability to cope with good fortune."<sup>72</sup>

A secondary, yet equally intriguing, aspect of Aristotle's instruction of Alexander may be observed in a Philip's supposed transmission of a letter to Aristotle in the year 356 B.C.E. which celebrated Alexander's birth while simultaneously stating hopes that he, Aristotle, would be the Macedonian prince's instructor once he had grown. This letter, however, may have been a forgery (either dating back to the second B.C.E. or to Andronichus of Rhodes), seeing as Aristotle was still a little-known student at Plato's Academy who had yet to sufficiently fulfill the demands of his "pre-philosophic" studies at the time. Thus, it seems as if this letter must be treated with sober skepticism since it remains highly unlikely that Philip would invite Aristotle, an inexperienced young student during this period, to educate his only son and heir apparent to the Macedonian throne.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 127.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 127-128.

Yet another strange letter, apparently from Aristotle to Philip (and possibly penned in 343 B.C.E.) advertises Aristotle's interest as Alexander's tutor and further cites his being a student of Plato for twenty years. This letter also seems to be false, seeing as Aristotle's own interests had begun to recede from Plato's teachings by this time and, consequently, causing him to possess certain reluctance in regards to mentioning his previous association with Plato. Furthermore, it seems that Theopompus, a student of Isocrates and, therefore, a philosophical opponent to Plato and Aristotle, was the "court historian" of Macedonia during this period. Being aware of Theopompus' influence in Macedonia, it is unlikely that Aristotle would have actually mentioned his being a student of Plato's. Thus, if one was to assume the letter's authenticity, then one could equally assume that Theopompus would have done everything in his power to prevent Aristotle from travelling to Macedonia to instruct Alexander.<sup>74</sup> Although in no sense critical, these two curious records of correspondence between Aristotle and Philip certainly serve as a means to contextualize the relationships which not only existed between the thinker and Macedonian king but also supply a certain amount of insight into the nature of Aristotle's reception in Pella by the Macedonian court. Thus, while it would seem that the exchange between Aristotle and Philip was quite amiable, those individuals whom the regent favored and who composed the royal circle of Macedonia may not have responded to Aristotle's presence as congenially as Philip did.

Despite Aristotle's preoccupation, and probable frustration, with Alexander's education, his duties to the Macedonian throne did not impede his own prolificacy. In regard to this, it is clear that Aristotle's second literary phase continued into that time in which he offered his instructional services to Philip and, consequently, Aristotle is sure to have not only committed his labor to the aforementioned texts which constitute this segment of his scholarly progression

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 129-130.

but to have also conducted additional political studies as well. Furthermore, Aristotle also composed his own edition of Homer's "Iliad" for the purposes of instruction and may have applied his innovative scientific method, developed during his exposure to his biological studies, to political science as well. Additionally, Aristotle also produced monographs, such as "Monarchy" and "Colonies," and continued his biological research during this stage of his life.<sup>75</sup>

Regardless of the means by which Aristotle distributed his time and attention during his education of Alexander in Pella, it is certain that he did not forward his efforts to the latter for long, seeing that, by 336 B.C.E., Philip II's abrupt death at the hands of an assassin resulted in Alexander's acceptance of his father's authority in Macedonia and, in turn, prompted Aristotle to leave Alexander's new domain.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Alexander, who was now far beyond Aristotle's instruction, ascended to the throne that very same year (where eventually pursued those military exploits which conferred the title "the Great" upon his person), thus causing Aristotle to first journey from Macedonia to his home city of Stagira and, again, impelled his travel to Athens once more.<sup>77</sup> Such a revolution in power dynamics which necessitated Aristotle's departure from Macedonia, however, is not often without violent conflict, and Alexander's capture of authority in the region was no exception to this assertion.

After Philip's assassination in 336 B.C.E., Alexander succeeded him with particular difficulty. Attalus and his followers attempted to seize power in Macedonia for the infant son of Cleopatra (who was Philip's second wife and niece of the former) while Amyntas, who was the son of Perdiccas and former ward of Philip, sought to occupy the vacated monarchy as well. Many of these individuals, however, were either executed or murdered once Alexander assumed the throne. The whole of Greece, which had been subjugated to the military might of Philip prior

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<sup>75</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 3-4.

to his untimely death, also attempted to rebel following his assassination. Many of the Greek cities rejoiced after Philip's death and some, such as Demosthenes in Athens, did not believe that Alexander possessed the power or character to preserve the Macedonian kingdom to the same extent which his father had. Ambracia expelled its Macedonian garrison, Aetolia recalled its anti-Macedonian exiles, Thessaly was taken over by anti-Macedonian partisans, the Balkan peoples revolted and Athens and Thebes celebrated Philip's death. These blatant manifestations of political resistance, however, were soon quelled by the Macedonian army as a result of Alexander's extraordinary wrath.<sup>78</sup>

Alexander quickly subdued Thessaly, thus re-establishing the Amphiclitonic League and formally making himself its protector and, with the exception of Sparta, experienced little resistance in suppressing Greece. Alexander then forgave Athens, Thebes and Ambracia for their hostility and recreated the League of Corinth (which had been originally established by Philip in 338 B.C.E.), thus selecting himself as the supreme commander of the Greek cities. Alexander then subdued the Illyrians, Epirotes and Thracians in 335 B.C.E. The Greek cities, however, continued their rebellious behavior while Alexander commenced his subjugation of the Balkan peoples. Alexander, however, immediately returned to Greece to punish reciprocal denial of his authority with harsh punishment.<sup>79</sup>

The city of Thebes, in an attempt to unfetter itself from Macedonian chains, resisted Alexander and, consequently, was besieged, stormed and razed to the ground. The Arcadians, in turn, immediately condemned those individuals who persuaded them to allocate military aid to the Thebans to death while in Athens, Demades and Demosthenes quickly relayed an embassy to Alexander to congratulate him in his just suppression of the Thebans. However, Alexander was

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<sup>78</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 134.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

cognizant of Athens' treacherous intentions and demanded that the top anti-Macedonian politicians, including Demosthenes, Lycurgus, Hyperides, Charidemus and Chares, be transferred into his custody as further penance for the city's denial of his will and for all Theban refugees, who were being maintained in Athens following the destruction of their city, be expelled. At the last moment, however, Alexander softened his terms and only demanded that Charidemus, a Thracian mercenary leader and notorious explorer, be expelled; a rare move for the often-vengeful Macedonian king. Although the Athenians readily expelled Charidemus in response, they retained its newfound Theban population.<sup>80</sup>

It was, therefore, amidst this incredible political turmoil, created as a result of Alexander's consolidation of political power and subsequent fulfillment of his military designs, that Aristotle returned to Athens. However, it must further be mentioned that, when Aristotle travelled to Athens for his second time in 335 B.C.E., he arrived in the city at a point which was nearly simultaneous with that of the conquering Macedonian armies, thus resulting in an automatic association between Aristotle and the political oppression of Alexandrian Macedonia in the minds of the local Athenians. Such an affiliation with Macedonia, when coupled with his pre-existing alien legal status in Athenian society, would eventually be the bane of his existence, for despite his humble desire to simply unravel the wonders of human reality and philosophically digest its constitutive substances, Aristotle remained unable to evade the political prejudice which ominously descended upon his quotidian livelihood as an effect of his history with this expansionistic kingdom of northern Greece.<sup>81</sup>

Legal and social constraints did not prevent Aristotle from pursuing his intellectual ambitions and by the time he returned to Athens in 335 B.C.E., for he now possessed an

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 134-136.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 141.



admirable degree of instructional skill due to his exposure to the direction of the philosophical studies of his students in such academic centers as the Academy, Pella, and the Platonic circles of Assos and Mitylene. Thus, the motivations which existed behind Aristotle's decision to found his own Peripatetic School in Athens, which was prominently understood throughout the ancient Greek world as being the intellectual capital of the entire region, may seem obvious when one examines the thinker's own educational background.<sup>82</sup> Aristotle not only resided within the confines of his own center of learning but he conducted research in the Lyceum as well, in addition to his instruction of young scholars and those performance of necessary administrative tasks which were conducive to the institution's progress, thus dedicating a respectable ten years at the institution itself.<sup>83</sup>

One theory concerning Aristotle's formation of the Peripatetic School in the Lyceum, however, diverges from this seemingly apparent conclusion by advancing the notion that the thinker created the new institution in a direct, and potentially-hostile, response to Xenocrates' ascendancy to leadership in the Platonic Academy. Yet another theory supplies a counterargument to that of the former, stating that, upon its very inception, the Aristotelian Lyceum functioned in a state of harmonious association with the educational institution directed by Xenocrates. The relationship which existed between the Academy of Xenocrates and the Aristotelian Lyceum, as well as the precise motivations which contributed to the creation of the latter, are virtually impossible to discern and, consequently, are confined to the realm of academic speculation; Aristotle's decision to create a distinct institution may have been the ultimate result of the genuinely original philosophical doctrines which Aristotle adopted following his retreat from the Platonic Academy and during his pursuit of his intellectual

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<sup>82</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 73.

<sup>83</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 4.

interests while travelling throughout the Aegean. The most obvious matter, however, remains that Aristotle did indeed establish a separate pedagogical establishment than that of Xenocrates' Academy.<sup>84</sup>

It appears that, prior to the formation of Aristotle's Peripatetic School, the Lyceum originally served as a public sanctuary for the ancient Athenian cult of Apollo Lykeios (or Apollo the wolf-slayer or the wolf-god). Furthermore, the history of the Lyceum sanctuary itself seems fairly primordial since the worship of Apollo-esque deities as wolf-gods appear to have been a practice which dates as far back as pre-Hellenic religion. There is, however, little evidence that the Lyceum contained a temple to Apollo Lykeios, despite the fact that it did contain a famous statue of the deity which dates back to approximately the middle of the fourth century B.C.E. and is a clear indication of the cult's influence and prestige among the ancient Athenians. It is further clear that, sometime after the Lyceum was used as a shrine of the cult of Apollo Lykeios, it was used as a location of exercise and gymnasium was eventually constructed there. Although it is difficult to know when the gymnasium was constructed in the Lyceum, numerous sources begin to refer to the public structure by the late fifth century B.C.E.<sup>85</sup>

Opinions concerning the physical location of the Lyceum vary, ranging from the modern Syntagma Square, the vicinity of the Russian Orthodox Church of Lykodemos and the Kolonaki Square to the former Rizarion Seminary, the area around the modern Byzantine Museum and the left bank of the Ilissos. Although ancient literature tends to be fairly specific concerning the ancient site of the Lyceum, archaeological evidence has failed to firmly establish an accurate point at which the archaic testimonies could be assembled in order to discover its exact location. Many critical archaeological discoveries have been made, however, in the eastern part of Athens

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<sup>84</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 73.

<sup>85</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 9-15.

which may potentially serve as legitimate sources for revealing the location of the ancient Lyceum. During construction and renovation of Syntagma Square, E. Vanderpool and J. Travlos were granted permission to conduct archaeological examinations of the site. In the course of their analysis, Vanderpool and Travlos uncovered a stoa-like structure which dated to the fourth century B.C.E. Although Vanderpool accurately observed the uncovered structure to have been similar in many respects to the Stoidion mentioned in Theophrastus' last will, the remains of the structure are no longer currently visible and were insufficiently documented.<sup>86</sup>

The discovery of Vanderpool and Travlos may be further combined with another set of remains, uncovered by Greek archaeologists near the end of the nineteenth century, seem to indicate that some portion of the Lyceum (specifically, the gymnasium) may have extended to the region directly south of the Church of Lykodemos and behind the statue of Lord Byron at the corner of Zappeion Park; these remains, although determined to have been constructed during the Roman era, are likely to have been erected by Emperor Hadrian who, known for being a philhellene, probably rebuilt one of the more prominent ancient Greek structures as opposed to one of his own. Additionally, it is also well-known that Hadrian particularly admired the Greek Lyceum for its architecture, thus leading one to conclude that the Imperial-era gymnasium may have been a replica of the Greek original which existed in the Lyceum. These archaeological findings, when coupled with epigraphical evidence which indicates that the ancient Lyceum was located in a physical position that was adjacent to the city itself, provides contemporary scholars with a rough proximity of the ancient Lyceum as it was known to Aristotle in the fourth century B.C.E.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 16-17, 22.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 22-23, 28.

When Aristotle founded the Peripatetic School in the Athenian Lyceum, he is said to have not only rented the local shrines to Apollo and the Muses but also a covered walk (or “peripatos”) and various other buildings, including the original gymnasium, to found his school.<sup>88</sup> In regards to this point, the actual nomenclature of Aristotle’s Peripatetic school, as well as the philosophy which stemmed from it, appears not to have referred to a specific attitude or ideology of the scholastic community but, instead, to a physical feature of the institution itself. In fact, every great gymnasium in Athens contained at least one region called the “peripatos,” for not only did the Academy possess a “peripatos” but the gymnasium at the Lyceum most certainly boasted one that was probably colonnaded as well, thus giving rise to those famed testimonies which assert that Aristotle became prominently known for instructing his pupils while striding along a peripatet.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, just like the Platonic Academy and the Stoa of Zeno, which apparently earned their names from specific locations, the school, as well as its adherents and the philosophical doctrine established by Aristotle, at the Lyceum were distinguished by a title which was developed from a physical area within the Lyceum gymnasium itself as opposed to the actual behavior of Aristotle within the educational institution which, in turn, was allegedly characterized by a repetitive pace during his lectures.<sup>90</sup> In this respect, it is highly likely that the Peripatetic School was christened in a manner which conformed to the conventional tradition of entitlement for the most respected educational institutions in Athens, being the conveyance of a given school’s identity in the academic realm of ancient Greece via its most notable physical structures. Additionally, the Peripatetic School may have earned its name due to the simplicity which such a title permitted in its implementation in literary pieces; indeed, the most common descriptive term utilized for its

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<sup>88</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 22.

<sup>89</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle’s School*, p. 73-74.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

adherents, namely “Lykeion,” could not be conveniently transmuted into the adjectival manifestation of the word due to its inability to properly adopt the Greek “-ikos” suffix, thus causing them to simply be referred to by that word which indicated the physical location within the Lyceum gymnasium where Aristotle allegedly conducted his philosophical lectures.<sup>91</sup>

One particularly curious characteristic which the Peripatetic School shared with its Platonic antecessor is that neither formal or legal stipulations bound the instructor to his student or vice versa and those who attended and taught at these institutions often referred to themselves as “friends” or “philoi” in order to express the fraternal mood of the community and to indicate that each participated within the intellectual fold by means of his own consent and in the absence of social or bureaucratic constraints.<sup>92</sup> In this respect, it appears as though Aristotle shared a quasi-communal lifestyle with his colleagues and students at the Lyceum, thus neglecting the implementation of any stringent hierarchical social structure within the school itself.<sup>93</sup> In addition to this pedagogically egalitarian environment, the instructors and philosophers who frequented Aristotle’s Lyceum were always granted the power to abdicate from their respective positions to attend, teach at, or create another center of scholarship if they so wished.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, such freedom of mobility and conscious as was exhibited by the Peripatetic School is likely to have not only contributed to the success of the Lyceum itself but probably stimulated the quality of academia in the whole of ancient Greece due to the liberal transmission of ideas which occurred as a product of the absence of restrictive policies on the scholastic ambition and preferences of those associated with Aristotle’s center of education.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>93</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle’s School*, p. 76.

Autonomy was, therefore, clearly granted a respectable position of preponderance in the Peripatetic school for another commonality which existed between the Aristotelian Lyceum and the Platonic Academy was that of ideological clemency. What evidence that is available seems to indicate that divergence from the philosophical doctrines of the head of the school appears to have been far rarer, or less conspicuous, in the Peripatetic school than in the Academy, for nothing currently exists to suggest that any of the students in the Lyceum were as intellectually independent in regards to the teaching of their instructors as Eudoxus and Aristotle were while studying at the Platonic institution. Therefore, while there appears to have been little or no doctrinal debates in the Lyceum like those which were concerned with Plato's Theory of Forms or the role which human pleasure occupied in an individual's life as they were argued in the Platonic Academy and later recounted in much of Aristotle's own work, there still seems to have been some semblance, if not to a limited degree, of tolerance in the variation of intellectual thought among the instructors and pupils of the Lyceum. The sole exception to this assertion, however, may be observed in Theophrastus who, being a man who was most certainly very near to being Aristotle's contemporary, is certain to have been among the abovementioned thinkers whose thought functioned autonomously from the scholar's own philosophical views.<sup>95</sup>

Unlike their perspectives on academic acceptance, one feature which did distinguish the Peripatetic School from the Platonic Academy was the type of subject matter addressed in the "mathemata" of the former. Firstly, it is likely that, seeing as Aristotle conceived the field of rhetoric as a legitimate one (and thus diverging from Plato in this respect), going so far as to advocate its use during his tutelage at the Academy, and delivered lectures on the art of persuasion in the Platonic institution, such a topic existed as a part of the Peripatetic curriculum and probably enjoyed a much greater amount of attention in the Lyceum than it did in its

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 76-78.

Platonic counterpart. In contrast with Platonic doctrine, which was primarily concerned with mathematics, ancient sources seem to indicate that, within the walls of the Peripatetic school, it was biology, not mathematics, which served as the primary source of knowledge, thus potentially resulting in a marginalization of the former in favor of the latter in the course content provided in the Lyceum. Additionally, the quantity and type of academic material available for examination in both the Platonic Academy and Aristotelian Lyceum was probably subjected to the various tastes and predilections of their respective intellectual communities and, consequently, may have resulted in a consistent vacillation of topics throughout the lifespan of each center of education.<sup>96</sup>

Aristotle's rational independence and the lack of compunction which he displayed in his deviation from his teacher most certainly contributed to the clear discrepancy which, as indicated by a considerable quantity of evidence, distinguished the Peripatetic School from its predecessors in the ancient Greek world. In fact, the Aristotelian Lyceum was innovative in a number of aspects; Aristotle and his Peripatetic scholars initiated an extensive accumulation and classification of information in regard to the multifarious existence in which the human species discovers itself via a conspicuously-empirical approach. In light of this, it may have been Aristotle, and subsequently Theophrastus, who invented, perpetuated and indirectly transmitted their thoroughly-organizes empirical methods to the Platonic Academy and a later juncture. Ultimately, it was Aristotle's initial implementation of the empirical techniques which became the quintessence of the Peripatetic School and which incurred the most significant recognition, as well as most overt instances of criticism, upon the Lyceum.<sup>97</sup>

Aristotle's invention of a new empiricism, however, was but the product of a timely progression of intellectual thought which originated with the famed Socrates. The Socratic

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 83-85.

method, which was an amalgamation of deductive rationality, dialectical discourse, the extraction and analysis of those philosophical inquiries of his contemporaries and antecessors and the revolutionary employment of inductive logic, was predicated upon, and therefore emphasized, the latter via observation in order to elucidate universality and to conform it to an absolute definition which was generally applicable. Indeed, Aristotle's own *modus operandi* in regard to the examination of physical phenomena was rooted in a logical structure which was fundamentally deductive and generally indicated its concise scrutiny by first introducing the substance or concept which has been selected for rational digestion as well as the particular difficulties or enigmatic perplexities associated with said substance or concept. Aristotle's method then proceeds by explicitly addressing the perspectives and conclusions previously advanced by various thinkers relative to the matter in question and then forwards his own objections to these interpretations in a manner which generates sound skepticism with the psyche of the objective speculator.<sup>98</sup>

Next, Aristotle's own philosophical strategy of inquiry proposes an idiosyncratic and novel means of resolving the intellectual predicament affiliated with the substance or concept in question and supplies sufficient empirical or rational justification for these conclusions (which, in turn, often result in the creation of an unprecedented interpretation of the matter) and, finally, subjects the aforementioned alternative perspectives of other intellectuals to a rigorous process of abnegation on the basis of his own findings (and, in certain cases, challenges these theories immediately following their introduction in the preceding stage of his systematic method of determining the universal essences of physical phenomena and intangible concepts).<sup>99</sup> Aristotle's empirical and inductive approach to philosophy (as it was developed from a long history of

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<sup>98</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 12-13.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*



Socratic thought), therefore, sought to capture universality within the variable circumstances of human reality and, given the gravity of such a task, it is evident that this particular technique necessitated the creation of yet another inventive strategy, namely the accumulation, systemization and delivery of data.

In order to sufficiently complement Aristotle's scientific approach to philosophy, the Peripatetic School assembled a thoroughly-innovative form of organizing and presenting the information that it analyzed and released; an aspect of the Aristotelian Lyceum that not only served to distinguish the educational institution from its Platonic counterpart but which existed as an additional indication that, indeed, Aristotle and his fellow Peripatetics had overtly deviated from the philosophical, and therefore literary, tradition accepted by all of its scholarly predecessors. The ground-breaking delivery of text-based information developed in the Peripatetic School is called the "sungoge" which presents a certain quantity of data, collected by means of a highly-organized and methodical form of accumulation, on a given subject.<sup>100</sup> Such an tactic, advanced by the Peripatetic School, inaugurated the first pedagogical use of text-based material en masse and, as a result, conferred a new academic concentration upon the arts of research and reading in the scholastic world of ancient Greece.

Furthermore, the Peripatetic School in the Lyceum eventually, in a physical sense, experienced an astonishing expansion as a result of the intellectual procedures which were conducted within the realm of the Aristotelian community. It is clear that, if such vast research projects as those conducted at the Lyceum were indeed assumed to the extent to which they have been claimed, then the Peripatetic School demanded a substantial amount of additional material space than what had been previously required by its institutional predecessors in order to make the necessary spatial accommodations available for the various biological samples and

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<sup>100</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 89-90.

documents utilize for the purpose of supplementing this work. Interestingly enough, it appears that the Aristotelian Lyceum contained an extensive and methodically organized library for use in the school's many academic endeavors which, seeing as no prior educational establishment (including the Platonic Academy) seems to have possessed an equivalent collection of literature for general use, may have been the first of its kind in the ancient Greek world. Thus, it would arrive as no surprise that Aristotle, who was fondly referred to as a reader by Plato during his tutelage in the Academy, was the first of his kind to possess the proper knowledge that books complemented philosophical and scientific inquiry in a manner which was virtually unparalleled and it was due to this critical insight that he established the first known library of the period.<sup>101</sup>

It appears as no coincidence, then, that Aristotle's third literary period coincided with this work in the Lyceum and, consequently, is an accurate reflection of the highly systematic and methodical procedure which he developed in regards to the empirical examinations and research projects which he conducted during his occupancy of the position of scholar of this academic institution. Every piece of text-based material which currently survives from this third, and last, phase in Aristotle's literary career seems to have been extracted from comments which were specifically designed for instruction in the Lyceum and, as a result, tend to lack the degree of stylistic or rhetorical palatability which is early exoteric works possessed. Regardless, these esoteric treatises are constituted by the majority of Aristotle's greatest works, including his "De Interpretatione," "The Topics," "Metaphysics," "The Physics," "On the Heavens," "On the Soul," "The Nichomachean Ethics" and "Politics."<sup>102</sup> These works, which are definitive expressions of Aristotle's mature thought, are those which have come to define him most throughout the ages and form the bulk of writings contributed to him.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>102</sup> Kiernan, *Aristotle Dictionary*, p. 5, 8-10.

Aristotle's life in the Lyceum was not only marked by developments in his intellectual life but also witnessed several transformations in his personal life as well. Although it is difficult to attribute the events to a specific period in Aristotle's life, it is known that, following the death of his wife, Pythias, Aristotle maintained an illegitimate relationship with a woman named Herpyllis, who was a former handmaid of Pythias. While slightly speculative, it is further believed that Herpyllis may have been a native of Stagira as well and, after engaging in extramarital relations, evidently bore Aristotle a son, named Nichomachus. Aristotle's son, Nichomachus, was most likely still a young child when his father died in 322 B.C.E. Due to Aristotle's distribution of his estate to Nichomachus, it is assumed that he declared him either legitimate or adopted. Nichomachus was probably instructed by Theophrastus in the Lyceum, but the boy appears to have been an apathetic student, at best. It is further reported that Nichomachus died as a young soldier in an unknown war and was allegedly known for contributing little to the benefit of mankind throughout the duration of his life. As reported in Theophrastus' last will and testament, it seems as though Nichomachus had died by 287-286 B.C.E.<sup>103</sup>

As Aristotle's scholastic and personal life flourished during his second residence in Athens, the whole of Greece again fell prey to political erosion. After experiencing years of tacit and subtle persecution at the hands of the Athenians, both Aristotle, and the Lyceum itself for that matter, had become heavily reliant upon the public security which was afforded by the Macedonian dominance of the region. However, when Alexander died in 323 B.C.E., both Aristotle and his fledgling institution quickly became the natural victim of the ensuing anti-Macedonian uprising in Athens as a result of his overt affiliation with the Macedonian crown as well as his alien legal status.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, viewed as a Macedonian intruder, Aristotle quickly

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<sup>103</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 81-82.

<sup>104</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 95-96.

became the victim of social coercion, produced by Athenian patriots and xenophobes alike. The clear alienation which surrounded Aristotle in Athens is, ultimately, what is likely to have driven him from the city a second time in 323 B.C.E.<sup>105</sup>

Following Alexander's death in Babylon and with Aristotle's close friend and Macedonian military commander, Antipater, unavailable to provide Aristotle with military protection, the xenophobia of the Athenians reached a renewed climax and the thinker was eventually subjected to unsubstantiated charges of impiety and blasphemy. Indeed, after the short-term political ascension of strictly anti-Macedonian patriots, such as the ever-disdainful Demosthenes, Lycurgus, Hyperides and Himeraeus, claimed the renowned philosopher to have sacrilegiously desecrated the name of the gods by allegedly worshipping his long-deceased ex-father-in-law, Hermias of Assos, in a poem which was written to commemorate his life as well as his death. Thus, the nonexistent crimes which were brought against Aristotle for impiety were predicated upon the basis that the artistic piece which he composed for Hermias was a religious paen of sorts which he sung to the slain king regularly while residing in the common dining rooms when, in reality, the heartfelt ode was likely to have been more of a commemorative work in his honor. It is, therefore, clear that not only was it unlikely that Aristotle's poem for Hermias was not a religious dedication but was a memorial hymn for his deceased friend and martial relative; despite this, however, Aristotle's charges remained, for it was not his purported blasphemy which wrongfully incriminated him, but his Macedonian sympathies which led to his condemnation.<sup>106</sup>

With the recently-expounded theories of Aristotle's life in mind, it appears as though his fate was greatly intertwined with Macedonia's; Aristotle was forced to leave Athens in 348

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<sup>105</sup> Chroust, *Aristotle*, p. 141-143.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142-143, 145-146.

B.C.E. after Philips' sack of Olynthus, was again able to return to Athens in 335-334 B.C.E. after Alexander's military successes and was again forced to flee from the city after the death of the latter in 323 B.C.E., never being able to return again after this event. Thus, due to his pro-Macedonian background and orientation, Aristotle suffered a fate all-too similar to many of the greatest minds in the ancient Greek world.<sup>107</sup> After being forced to avoid the same treatment which the Athenians dealt Socrates before him, Aristotle left the Lyceum in the possession of his trusted successor, Theophrastus, and retreated to his maternal homeland in the city of Chalcis on the island of Euboea, where he died in the year 322 B.C.E. as a result of a disease of the digestive organs.<sup>108</sup> Aristotle is said to have left a compassionate and highly-reflective last will in his wake following his death in Chalcis in which he awards his Macedonian friend, Antipater, the primary source of authority of his remaining assets but also neglects to make any mention neither of the city of Athens nor of the Peripatetic School which he founded.<sup>109</sup>

Although concluding his life as a victim of a spiteful and ignorant world, the product of Aristotle's existence, embodied by the plethora of intellectual material which survived him, has indubitably shaped the very essence of modern thought in the most definitive manner possible. Thus, the techniques, philosophical concepts and scientific theories which a man who, defined by such immense perspicacity and incredible ingenuity, instigated several of the most elementary advancements in the interpretation and comprehension of human reality have certainly assumed their own imperative roles in the formation in this evolution of ascertaining the nature of reality as it is known. In this respect, one need only dissect Aristotle's philosophy to realize the absolute immutability which denotes his core doctrines but a far more profound and equally critical cognizance regarding such a reputable thinker is derived from a holistic analysis of his life: that,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 143-144.

<sup>108</sup> Ferguson, *Aristotle*, p. 22.

<sup>109</sup> Lynch, *Aristotle's School*, p. 95-96.

in fact, Aristotle was a man; a human being who perceived, contemplated, lived and died.

Therefore, perhaps it is imprudent to aggrandize this philosophical giant beyond his capacity, for despite his indispensable contributions to mankind, it is quite clear the most remarkable attribute of Aristotle is that, indeed, he was a man.

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